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## **The Primacy of Function over Structure**

### **Analogy Reading of Wittgenstein's "Meaning is Use" Aphorism**

#### **Abstract**

*In the paper authors examine Wittgenstein's standpoint "the meaning of a word is its use in an utterance" mainly in the context of sections 23 and 43 of the Philosophical Investigations in the light of some other sections (namely 197–199, and 209), and some influential interpretations of these passages. They claim that "meaning is use" slogan is an analogy. Additionally, partially following Baker and Hacker 2005, authors argue that the standpoint is understandable only in the context of dependence of language-games on forms of life (wider interpretation). Namely, meaning of a word is its use in an utterance only if the use has a place in a life. In other words, in order to understand language-games it seems natural to observe them in their natural context of forms of life they belong to. Therefore, the claim "meaning is use" can be understood only as an analogy or a metaphor in precisely these directions of interpretation.*

#### **Keywords**

analogy, forms of life, language-games, the meaning of a word is its use, metaphor, similarities, use of a word, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gordon Baker & Peter Hacker

"Organic architecture seeks superior sense of use and a finer sense of comfort, expressed in organic simplicity."

Frank Lloyd Wright

"A poet's words can pierce us. And that is of course causally connected with the use that they [the words] have in our life. And it is also connected with the way in which, conformably to this use, we let our thoughts roam up and down in the familiar surroundings of the words."

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 155, I-160, 28e

## **1. Interpretation<sup>1</sup>**

Meanings of words are fixed, formal, ceremonial, and dead in a way (something like the concept of a calculus or of an essence in PI). As opposed, uses of words fluctuate, alter, vary, they are in constant change, almost organic and alive (something like the concept of a function in PI). They surely have many

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Abbreviations: FOL = a form of life, LG = a language-game,  $\sigma$  = similarity,  $\alpha$  = analogy,

and f = feature. Standard abbreviations of Wittgenstein's works are supplied in references.

similarities, but dissimilarities seem to be far more important. The former are explained and almost “calculated” in order to be known, while the later are explicated (interpreted) and almost “seen” in order to be understood. Meanings of words (i.e. complete signs) without their uses are like “organic architecture” without “sense of use” and “organic simplicity” in Frank Lloyd Wright’s dictum. Words are alive in use, and in use they have their meaning; in their use they are in an organic unity with their surroundings. Meanings and uses of words constitute a structured sentence only if the sentence is an analogy.

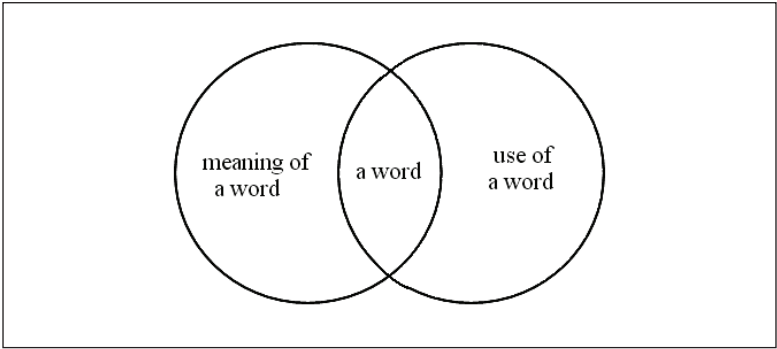
In his contribution “Immodesty without mirrors: making sense of Wittgenstein’s linguistic pluralism” to “Wittgenstein’s Lasting Significance” (edited by M. Kölbel and B. Weiss 2004) Huw Price concerning somewhat broader topic writes the following: “By thus distinguishing the model—the abstract, formal, idealized conception of a language—from the issue of what it takes for that model to fit sociological reality, we give ourselves two locations where pragmatic considerations may play a part. In the latter location, indeed, it seems that nothing but pragmatic considerations can be relevant. In some sense, whether our model correctly represents the linguistic activity of the community in question can depend on nothing but the use of linguistic items in the day-to-day practice of that community.” (Price 2004:185) This point nicely summarizes our present intention regarding the basic idea. We want to explore the role our form of life plays in meaning determination both in the works of Wittgenstein and in practice.

The “meaning of a word is its use” idea was not completely new in times when Wittgenstein started to develop his language-game account. For instance, J. Dewey wrote that “Meaning is primarily a property of behaviour.” (Dewey 1925:179, commented in Quine 1981:46) On the other hand, pragmatics as a key approach to semiotics plays important part here previously to Wittgenstein (and Austin and Grice too), and after his works as well. (Verschueren and Östman 2009) Concerning Wittgenstein, our interpretative addition is that the very expressions, that is “meaning is use” (PI 43), and the relation (*embeddedness*) between “speaking of a language” and “a form of life” (PI 23) will be explicated as closely related. They can be interpreted in many incompatible ways some of which are plainly dissonant with the presented one, as J. Schulte notes, “Wittgenstein’s remark [PI 23] is pretty vague and admits of many answers while excluding few.” (From e-mail correspondence, 21. 2. 2011, 18:12; for the view that allows our interpretation see Conant 1998:244)

The vital idea of the present paper is that Wittgenstein’s slogan “the meaning of a word is its use” is in fact a metaphor, or more broadly speaking an analogy. Consider the following:

- (a) There is a similarity between tools and words, (PI 11), there is even “the toolbox of language” (BT 18–9). More to that, there seems to be an analogy here as well, namely, the relation between tools and their functions is similar to the relation between words and their uses. This analogy can be abbreviated in a slogan “meaning as use”. If words are like tools, and if the meaning of a word is its use in a LG (PI 43), and if a LG is an important aspect of a FOL (in terms of the fact that the speaking of language, i.e. talking, uttering words, is an activity and as such it belongs to a FOL, PI 23), then obviously enough, as the meaning of a tool is so to say “visible” or “essentially manifested” only in the use of a tool, so is the meaning of a word manifested or visible only in an utterance, or in a dialogue as it is regularly used (in a LG),

- (b) And word's use in a LG is understandable only on the background of a FOL (PI 23) as a system or "a frame of reference" (OC 83). Both (a) and (b) are indeed the ideas explicitly claimed in PI, (a) additionally in PI 569, that is the idea that "language is an instrument" and were recognised and commented from the earliest reviews of PI on (Feyerabend 1955:449–83), and (b) in PI 19 and marked as the first of three "cardinal elements in his thought." (Strawson 1954:70–99) In short, as a tool cannot be understood outside of its function, so a language-game/meaning cannot be understood outside of its form of life/use. The first part of our argument (connecting (a) and (b)) is the following:
- (b1) If the meaning of a word is its use in utterances, sentences, dialogues, and eventually in LGs, and if use of a word is understandable only in the context of a FOL since it is closely connected to it, then LGs are closely connected to FOLs.
  - (b2) PI 43, 23 (and many other interpretatively probable convergent sections).
  - (b3) LGs are closely connected to FOLs. (This connection is demonstrated in §2.3)
- (c) The third part of the present interpretation is a little bit complicated. Wittgenstein in mentioned section, as in many other places, uses analogy or more specifically a metaphor (*meaning of a word as its use*) precisely because metaphors are often such that they cannot be understood without their non-formal yet immense dependence on particular experiences (presented in many language-games in BB and PI, Eco 1984:89, concerning the issue of Wittgenstein and metaphor see Hester 1967, Gill 1979), and this is of an utmost importance for understanding his implicit claim that LGs belong to FOLs (or that their function can be understood only within a FOL, as shown in Table 1) The point of our interpretation in favour of analogy reading is the following.
- (c1) If the language *is* an instrument (or a toolbox), then the meaning of a word (like tool) *is* its use.
  - (c2) Strictly speaking *neither* language *is* an instrument, *nor is* the meaning of a word its use.
  - (c3) On the other hand, if the language *is similar to* an instrument (or a toolbox), and if words *are similar to* tools, then meanings of words *are similar to* their uses (the analogy here consists of similarity between these similarities, as shown in Figure 1, see Eco 1984:93, Kövecses 2005:17–35, Steen 2007:47–73).



**Figure 1.** Classical Aristotelian three-term metaphor scheme applied to the present issue

The basic idea behind (c3) and the issue too are the following: Ad. (c3). First the idea. (1) Tools-meanings (A) are very similar to tools-functions (B) regarding their understanding ( $f_1$ ) or in symbolic fashion ( $A \sigma B \text{ r } f_1$ ). (where  $\sigma$  = similarity,  $\alpha$  = analogy, and  $f$  = feature) (2) Words-meanings (C) are very similar to words-uses (D) regarding their understanding ( $f_1$ ). ( $C \sigma D \text{ r } f_1$ ) (3) If (1) and (2), then there is an analogy between pairs (A, B) and (C, D) regarding their understanding ( $f_1$ ). (Hidden premises: Words-meanings are similar to tools-meanings regarding their understanding ( $f_1$ ). ( $C \sigma A \text{ r } f_1$ ) Words-uses are similar to tools-functions regarding their understanding ( $f_1$ ). ( $D \sigma B \text{ r } f_1$ ).) In other words, the pair (A, B) and (C, D) is analogous since pair (A, B) is similar to pair (C, D) regarding ( $f_1$ ) or in symbolic fashion  $\alpha(A, B) \sigma (C, D) \text{ r } f_1$ . The issue behind (c3) is related to the feature of relata in similarities and the analogy, namely understanding. Concerning (2) Wittgenstein determines the feature quantitatively that is “For a *large* class of cases...” (PI 43) and it holds for tools-meanings as well as for words-meanings. However, it can be interpreted qualitatively as well since the understanding of use is confronted to the knowledge of meaning, and then an understanding appears to be a kind of relevant aspect or quality of use, that is using, observing, and comparing uses of words (on the background of a FOL) leads to understanding. Concerning these middle points (a-c) Wittgenstein clearly claims that meaning “is” use in many sections besides PI 43. However, if it is true that the meaning of any word can be established purely *a priori*, or for that matter grammatically, i.e. without relating the word’s meaning to the word’s usage, then either “meaning is use” is not correct, or it should be interpreted differently. On the other hand “use is meaning” (PI 340), but if it is true that the use of any word can be established practically, then the same objection stands. In order to bypass this whole issue the idea is that the slogan should be interpreted not strictly, as in meaning as identical with use, but as an analogy, as in meaning as similar to use.

Language-games		Forms of life
Meanings of words	(their function) can be understood only within	Uses of words in actual speaking of a language in the context of other non-linguistic activities

**Table 1.** The analogy between LGs/FOLs and meanings of words/uses of words

Is the analogy-reading to some extent plausible? The plausibility comes from its obvious purpose and connection to other topics of PI.

- The purpose of the analogy-reading is that it instantly focuses one’s attention on “speaking of a language” activities, situations, and examples, and what is more important to non-speaking activities, situations, and examples surrounding LGs (facial expressions, gestures, bodily movements, and whole routines and practices) which seems to be the starting goal in PI.
- Taken as an analogy the expression seems to be more closely connected to remarks on the morphological method (for instance PI 66) and remarks on the morphological goal of philosophical investigation (for example PI 122).

More precisely, as linguistic phenomena, analogies, and especially metaphors, are totally immersed and completely surrounded by non-linguistic expe-

riences (sometimes by person's immediate experiences, sometimes via indirect experiences and sometimes by sheer imaginations based on experiences). People must have and must share a FOL in order to understand and to act in accordance with a metaphor. The last point requires understanding a FOL as a culture. In what follows this interpretation will be explicated.

### *Excuse 1*

The present approach makes that the whole issue sounds more tidy and systematic than it really is (noted by D. Richter, from the e-mail correspondence 1. 3. 2011, 20:26). Another limitation is that the approach and the results are not intended as a kind of thesis with far-reaching consequences for philosophies of language, linguistics, and semiotics in terms of syntactic-pragmatic dispute, nor in terms of Strawson's Homeric struggle concerning theories of meaning. On the other hand, the interpretation reveals Wittgenstein's hidden assumption in the explication of "meaning as use" metaphor. To use Derrida's famous saying that "there is nothing outside of the text" it can be claimed that Wittgenstein is in a way asking something like "Excuse me, which text?" in terms of ostensive manner of showing, reveals all weaknesses of the standpoint that the meaning is not use. Now, if one answers "This" or "That" to the question, the case for "linguistic idealism" is lost no matter if it is analytic or continental in its roots and the case for a kind of pragmatism is wide open, yet, as many scholars notice, not clear enough.

## **2. Explication or *under-interpretation* of PI 23 and 43**

Some elements of interpretation of PI 23, 43, and some other sections will be presented here in order to support main points of our claim as stated in the previous section. As a part of our general view on Wittgenstein's works and ideas that is to say that there is no 1, 2, 3, or even 4 Wittgensteins (say TLP, transition period, PI, and OC), rather 0.5 at best, the following interpretation will be a kind of under-interpretation of mentioned sections of PI. Concerning the present issue, the absent part or 0.5 Wittgenstein lacking from the text, simply consists in speaking languages, observing the activity itself in the context of day-to-day life, and perhaps an attempt to produce a perspicuous presentation of the activity itself.

### **2.1. *Dependence of language-games on forms of life (PI 23)***

Crucial notions in PI are LGs and FOLs. LGs have been presented by Wittgenstein himself in some detail (in BB most notably) and further analysed and applied in various directions by many Wittgenstein scholars, while this is not the case with FOLs which can be surprising since the fact is that LGs are considered as belonging to FOLs (PI 23). In order to develop this idea further on here it will be argued that in order to understand LGs, and his morphological method with it, it is by all means crucial to understand FOLs (for this matter see Biletzki 2009). Therefore, in the present paper the thesis "meaning is use" will be defended by means of obvious relation of dependence of LGs on FOLs, and therefore the dependence of word-use on action (linguistic and non-linguistic as well). This will account for the second part of the interpretation stated at the beginning of the paper (b).

### *Excuse 2*

On one hand, "meaning is use" thesis is both right and wrong when understood by linguists. It is correctly understood, for instance, by those engaged in functional semantics like in the following claim: "Language use therefore implies making the appropriate choices of linguistic forms for the appropriate communicative setting and cultural context." (Mwihaki 2004:128) In the philosophy of language the issue is pursued as well (Hintikka and Hintikka 1989:217–20, commentary in Määttänen 2005:171). For example Wittgenstein states, "I know that a sick man

is lying here? Nonsense! I am sitting at his bedside, I am looking attentively into his face. – So I don't know, then, that there is a sick man lying here? Neither the question nor the assertion makes sense (...) And "I know that there's a sick man lying here", used in an unsuitable situation, seems not to be nonsense but rather seems matter-of-course, only because one can fairly easily imagine a situation to fit it, one things that the words "I know that..." are always in place where there is no doubt, and hence even where the expression of doubt would be unintelligible. It was argued that the use of words actually serves as a link between language and the world." (OC, §10) Another issue is the following. "*Meaning is use* says that use function in a language completely exhausts meaning." (...) "But although this formulation is particularly associated with Wittgenstein, what he intended by it is a matter of controversy." (Skorupski 1999:30) Now, the controversy will be presented here not as the issue in linguistics, semiotics, or general philosophy of language, but only as the controversy concerning the explication of Wittgenstein's lines, and between few somewhat different interpretations of mentioned sections of PI by Wittgenstein scholars.

Most of introductory books, dictionaries, analytic exegeses (Glock 1996, McGinn 2000, Stern 2004, Baker & Hacker 2005) and papers on meaning and use in Wittgenstein generally claim that the meaning is use of a word in the language (Goldfarb 1988, Glock 1996:376–81, Skorupski 1999:29–59, Ring 2001, Richter 2004:116–8, Addis 2005:77–97). In our opinion this is only partially correct interpretation since

- If the meaning of a word is its use in a LG, and
- If LGs are closely related to FOLs,
- Then, what should one infer?

Wittgenstein said to N. Malcolm that "An Expression has meaning only in the stream of life." (Malcolm 2001:75), and he wrote "*Practices* give words their meaning." (ROC III 320) and "*I know all that*. And that will come out in the way I act, and in the way I speak..." (OC 395) Some Wittgenstein scholars take these and similar remarks to be quite important, surely more than an "aphorism" (Malcolm's note). (a) D. Richter in the dictionary entry claims that "Words, gestures, and expressions come alive, as it were, only within a language-game, a culture, or a form of life" (Richter 2004:118, see also 107). (b) However, other Wittgenstein scholars, such as H.-J. Glock, in the dictionary entry as well, claim that meaning is use is conceived "too wide" (Glock 1996:38) if it means that the meaning is determined "by its role in the whole life of a tribe" (EPB 149), and here it will be argued that it is not too wide. (c) Some minute exegetical analyses such as the one by G. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker which should help to resolve this dispute will be addressed later on. More to that, Wittgenstein's claim that a LG as an activity is closely connected and perhaps understandable only within a FOL as an activity (PI 23) seems to be almost as a kind of basic remark in semiotics or in cultural anthropology rather than in linguistics, or philosophy of language.

Surely it sounds odd and extravagant to claim that the meaning of any sole word whatsoever is determined by the life of the whole culture or a society (a). For the one thing, the word "determined" does not seem to be appropriate since the life of a whole society or a culture does not determine anything (concerning the present issue of course); it "functions" as the context of understanding dialogues and via that as the context of meaning of sentences, and words as well. Perhaps precisely this is the point of Wittgenstein's warning of a sort (PI 66), *do not think* of an essence (i.e. meaning), *but look* how it functions (i.e. is used). For one who is not familiar with tools the meaning of a hammer or nails is not perspicuous by thinking about meaning of these words, or by simply looking in a toolbox containing these among various other tools. One must see how these tools function, sometimes even try to do



it by oneself in order to understand what it is and how to use words “grammatically” correct.

Now, to claim that FOLs are this or that is of no importance here because if one for instance, claims, even with some sound arguments, that a FOL is a form of culture, then this does not capture the essence of Wittgenstein’s basic idea on this matter which says that LGs belong to FOLs in terms of activities, practices, and cultural routines as “natural environment” of activities of uttering words and sentences. What is important here is the idea that a language as a practice of speaking is the part (perhaps the most important one) of doing things within a bigger whole.

Wittgenstein uses many examples in order to illustrate this in fact quite simple and obvious idea with which any person would agree particularly if examples like the following one are of importance. One can ask what the expression “sitting on a chair” means, or what it takes for one to understand the expression. What Wittgenstein saying is that if a child sits on a chair in a situation in which a parent says “Sit on a chair and eat your lunch”, then a child understands what the expression means. Furthermore, a child can from certain age on, describe what it is going to do, namely it can say “I am going to sit on a chair”. Acting in particular way (i.e. teaching, learning, day to day practice, PI 197) enables understanding particular practices but what enables understanding their connections and the whole web is their background. In short, to act within a FOL is to understand.

Another odd claim can be the one about possibility to learn a language of a distant and unknown culture without being closely acquainted with it. For one thing, such a person already has a particular FOL (even bilingual persons). Another thing is that acquaintance with the culture by a person who already mastered its language adds something new to the language knowledge. These points can be seen by observing mistakes one makes while acting within a FOL, mistakes which cannot occur if a human or a machine (at least at the present moment of technological development) simply imitates actions of members of a FOL (in fact completely different kind of mistakes occur in these cases).

However, what is a philosopher’s job here? He/she does essentially the same: observing and describing actions and phenomena and these are almost the same as in cultural anthropology. Nevertheless, a philosopher, in addition, clearly and in a summarily fashion describes the phenomenon (LGs and FOLs) and this, if done properly, results with an understanding. Children learn by imitating elders. Every morning they sit on chairs in kitchens and have breakfasts. So a child imitates, it goes to the kitchen, tries to sit on a chair, drinks and eats as parents do. Does a child understand the practice, or does it imitate understanding as well without understanding anything at all (like the robot in the movie “Artificial Intelligence”)? Of course not, at least not as we elders do. On the other hand, do we understand child’s imitation? This issue will be addressed later on.

PI 199 (see also 197–8 as the detail presentation of elements summarised in 199) runs as follows:

“To follow a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are *customs* (uses, institutions). To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to have mastered a technique.” (PI 199, see Baker and Hacker 2009:140–5 for somewhat divergent interpretation at least concerning the related expression “social practice” that is objected to.)

Now, what kind of a technique is in question here? Is it merely a technique of mastering a language, i.e. using appropriate words and utterances in appropriate situations? Well, yes and no. In order for a human youngling to master a natural language it must learn various practices in standard situations in which various uses of various sentences are appropriate in terms of “everyday practices” (PI 197, 208), “training”, and “customs” (PI 198). The “technique” in PI 199 is so to say a technique of living a human life (Baker & Hacker 2009:144, especially (ii) *Action*). Since there is no “human life as such” a child must learn particular technique of a particular culture and of a particular natural language (which sometimes can be further interpreted on the bigger background such as “the common activity of mankind” / “shared human behaviour”, PI 206). Of course a child can be bilingual, but not bicultural in the same sense (as in the emigrant syndrome for instance). Understanding sentences describing chess pieces and their moves is a part of understanding, say, of the chess language, and understanding the chess language is a part of playing chess.

In short, meaning is use and the use here is the use of a word, an expression, a sentence, a whole language-game in the context, or on the background of a FOL. This means that to understand a sentence or a LG is to use a sentence or a LG appropriately in the context of particular FOL and its standard activities. To return to the child example, if a child is given an order “sit on a chair” and if a child sits on a chair, then the child understands the order and obeys it; or if a child is asked to describe its action and if it says “I am going to sit on a chair and this is what I am doing now” it can also be said that a child understands the sentence. This can be called a kind of “primordial understanding” as related to “primordial LGs”. Now, since “meaning is use” is a metaphor, so are LGs, and FOLs as well, but they are metaphors with particular purpose, namely, their purpose is to draw one’s attention to action, practice, application, use of words and utterances, and practice of speaking a language within a series of standard daily situations.

## 2.2. *Dependence of a meaning on its use (PI 43)*

LG approach is an issue of the method. Examples of the LG method are given in examples of “mini-languages” (Kenny 2006:129) with their “degenerate sentences” (PI 196) as complete LGs. As claimed by D. Stern:

“The central idea that motivates this method is that of drawing our attention to the context in which our use of language takes place.” (Stern 2004:88)

What is important that all examples of LGs are applied to any practice in which language is involved in some way, any interweaving of human life and language. (PI 7d, Stern 2004:88) So, the question was not just say “How to draw attention to the context in which an actual use of words takes place?” but as well for instance “How to show that actual use of language is strongly related and in a way embedded in life?” LG method is Wittgenstein’s answer to this question. This approach is the one R. Rorty calls “the pragmatic Wittgenstein”, namely:

“The pragmatic Wittgensteinians think that their hero’s importance consists in having replaced a bad theory about the relation between language and non-language, such as that offered in the *Tractatus*, with a better theory, the one offered in the *Philosophical Investigations*. (...) That is the view epitomized in the Wittgensteinian maxim ‘Do not look for the meaning, look for the use.’ It is not a ‘use-theory of meaning’, but rather a repudiation of the idea that we need a way of determining meanings.” (Rorty 2010:131, 140; the original text was read during 29<sup>th</sup> International Ludwig Wittgenstein Symposium of ALWS in Kirchberg am Wechsel, Austria, 2006).



Concerning Rorty's remark it can be added that in the light of PI 66 he could said something like do not think of the meaning, look at the use and when you see the pattern, you will understand the use, and this is all you need to know about the meaning.

Using the word slab in builders LG belongs to doing things with slabs within builders FOL. Meaning of the word slab is closely connected to doing things with slabs. Now, is the

- (a) "Slab" in PI 2 more similar
- (b) to our elliptical sentence "Slab!",
- (c) or to our word "slab"? (for commentary see McGinn 2000:52–60, Ring 2001)

Perhaps (a) is equally similar to (b) and (c) since, the similarity between (a) and (b) is *the similarity in understanding* order and an action as the appropriate response to the order, while the similarity between (a) and (c) is *the similarity in explaining* of the word/complete sign meaning. The first similarity leads to discussion on *the position of the sign in life*, while the second leads to *the position of the sign in grammar* (as shown in Table 3). Now, if language is an instrument, then it seems doubtless which discussion is more important. In other words, concerning meaning (a) seem to be more similar to our word "slab" (c), however regarding use (a) seems more similar to our elliptical sentence "Slab!" (b) in terms of "Bring me a slab!"

This similarity concerning use of (a) and (b) does not originate from syntactic structure analysis (or from a kind of structure in the speaker's mind for that matter, PI 20) since the structure of the mini language-game of PI 2 is primitive, or in short – there is no structure. The similarity of (a) and (b) originates from similarities in pragmatic contexts of the use of "slab" and "Bring me a slab!" (that is of LGs), and from similarities of practical occasions in which these uses are applied (that is embedded in FOLs as "culturally complex phenomena", McGinn 2000:60). This viewpoint is explicated in PI 43 and the text of the section runs as follows:

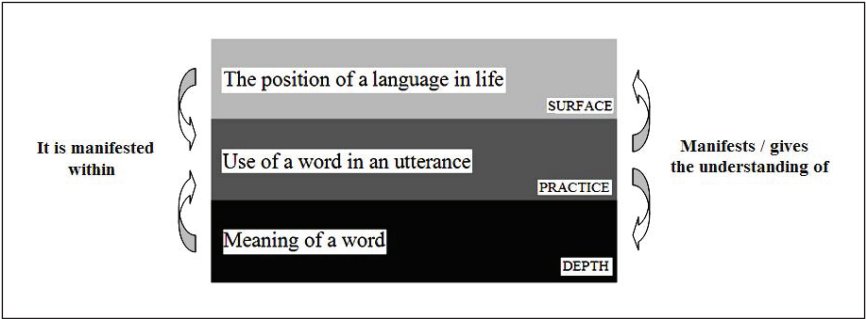
"For a *large* class of cases of the employment of the word "meaning" – though not for all – the word can be explained in this way: the meaning of a word is its use in the language" (PI 43, see also PG 60)

Words outside of utterances and these outside of discourses literally make no sense since these are backgrounds of their meaning. It is plain fact that an utterance, or a text, or a dialogue can be syntactically structured without a mistake and still its meaning or sense semantically speaking would be quite hard to detect, and *vice versa*. Order of words, and various connections between words and between sentences do not create meaningful totality; however, if *used* in proper manner "they create appearance of it" by all means (Velčić 1987, and for the emphasis on "completeness" in BB p. 82 see Ring 2001:14). Therefore, something else is responsible for this textual or speech unity and Wittgenstein's answer is that it is a FOL an utterance or a dialogue belongs to. In PI LG 2 there is something else implied if "Slab!" in the language of PI 2 is not relatively similar to our "Bring me a slab!" and that is the way in which the word/sign is spelled that is to say not as a request, but as a question, or as a warning (manner of uttering a word/sign as an intonation for example is of utmost importance). If "Slab!" in LG 2 is uttered as a call or an order, then this is relevant similarity to our "Bring me a slab!" However, if "Slab!" is uttered as a question, or as a warning, or if this matter cannot be decided, then this is relevant dissimilarity. Wittgenstein seems to suggest that there

is similarity, and it is the similarity in use if the manner of uttering and say intonation or pronunciation can be counted as use (the possibility is mentioned in PI 20–1). Without taking the use of a “Slab!” into account there is no way to decide on this matter concerning this criterion. On the other hand, if the use is to be counted in, then observing the use implies observing the use within the FOL it belongs to. There are other criteria as well, say position of workers, bodily movements, gestures, facial expressions, and similar, but these criteria are even more obviously connected with a FOL as a context in which a LG should be understood (the possibility is mentioned in PI 21). Therefore “Bring me a slab!” and “Slab!” mean the same, or are relevantly similar, because they have the same use. This crucial extension of Wittgenstein’s viewpoint, summarised by G. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, flows from common experience that:

“[T]he instruments of language are very diverse. We tend to be deceived by superficial uniformity of appearances (...), and to disregard differences of use and function (...) – as if we could apprehend only the handles of tools, disregarding the different kinds of things we do with them.” (Baker & Hacker 2005:135–136).

“The use of a word” comprises a lot of what is meant by “the meaning of a word” and while use of a word is by all means internal to its LG still it points to something outside of it as well, namely to a FOL to which it belongs (some hints can be found in AWL 48, PG 65, see also Baker & Hacker 2005:145, footnote 18). Meaning of a word seems to be perhaps not hidden, but surely implicit in a routine nature of LGs, and in fact it is in the same time manifested if LGs are observed in their natural environment of FOLs they belong to (“the position of a language in life”). Meaning is use of a word in an utterance, but utterances and whole LGs are understandable only within FOLs they belong to and meaning of a word is finally manifested within a FOL (as shown in Table 2).



**Table 2.** The relation of meaning of a word, its use, and life

However, to explicate (or to interpret) the use of a word from its implicit and so to say natural location within life or a FOL may go wrong in many ways since “It is a great temptation to want to make the spirit explicit.” (CV 11) and in a way it is “the spirit of the whole” (CV 9) which should be manifested if the use of a word is to be explicated. Namely, the normativity requirement for any acceptable concept of word-meaning (Baker & Hacker 2005:140–141) shows precisely this point which says that the understanding of a word or a sentence like for instance “Adjustable wrench!” manifests itself in one’s action i.e. an action of bringing and using an adjustable wrench. Again, the summary of the issue by Baker and Hacker seems to be of utmost importance:

“Just as a chess piece is put to use in a *move*, and a move is an actual move (...) only in the context of a game, so too words are put to use (primarily) in the context of utterances or speech-acts (...)” (Baker & Hacker 2005:139).

### Excuse 3

If one takes this analogy between LGs and speech-acts to be fruitful, then the focal point of the present paper is additionally yet only indirectly supported since as for speech-acts to be performed properly (be happy or unhappy and so forth and so on in original Austin’s terminology) there are many non-linguistic conditions, so for a LG in order to be understood there are many non-LG elements that should be taken into account, as demonstrated in the next section.

## 2.3. FOL and LG at play in LFM

What we’ve seen thus far are several examples where Wittgenstein seems to be implying that FOL plays a very important part in meaning determination. The exegetical work aside, it’s time to demonstrate FOL’s role in this process. Conveniently this demonstration is brought to us by Wittgenstein himself.

In *Wittgenstein’s Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics*, Lecture 1, he presents three uses of the expression, “I have discovered...”

- Use 1) Suppose Professor Hardy came to me [Wittgenstein] and said, “Wittgenstein, I’ve made a great discovery. I’ve found that...” I would say, “I am not a mathematician, and therefore I will not be surprised at what you say. For I cannot know what you mean until I know how you’ve found it.” We have no right to be surprised at what he tells us. For although he speaks English, yet the meaning of what he says depends upon the calculations he has made. (LFM, p. 17)
- Use 2) Similarly, suppose that a physicist says, “I have at last discovered how to see what people look like in the dark – which no one had ever before known.” – Suppose Lewy says he is very surprised. I would say, “Lewy, do not be surprised”, which would be to say, “Do not talk bosh.” ... Suppose he shows you some infra-red photographs and says, “This is what you look like in the dark.” (p. 17)
- Use 3) If I’m told that Mr. Smith flew to the North Pole and found tulips all around.<sup>2</sup> (p. 18)

We can symbolize this expression by stating:  $D_{Ix}$ , where “D” represents the discovery relation that obtains between “I”, the pronoun referring to the speaker of the utterance, and  $x$ , which is an empty variable suitable for any object, abstract or otherwise, to be discovered.

In Use 1, Professor Hardy makes the claim  $D_{Ia}$ , where “a” refers to any previously unknown solution to a particular arithmetical conundrum. Here, Wittgenstein plays the naïve co-worker who is neither familiar with the method by which one is to discover such a mathematical solution nor the advanced level of knowledge in mathematics that Professor Hardy obviously possesses. Not only is Wittgenstein unfamiliar with the vocabulary used at such a level, but he’s also unfamiliar with the calculations made. Thus, in order for Wittgenstein to understand Hardy’s discovery and determine the truth-value of  $D_{Ia}$ , not only does the solution have to be shown, but Wittgenstein must be familiar with the vocabulary used and the calculations made.

In Use 2, a physicist, who we’ll call Professor Robert Wood,<sup>3</sup> makes the claim  $D_I$ , What people look like in the dark. Here, Wittgenstein and Professor Lewy are the naïve witnesses of Wood’s discovery. Lewy is surprised and Wittgen-

<sup>2</sup> Although “I have discovered...” is not explicit in Use 3, I believe it is safe to imagine that it is implied.

<sup>3</sup> 30 seconds of research shows Dr. Robert Wood is the person to discover infrared photography, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_W.\\_Wood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_W._Wood).

stein does not recognize anything surprising about it. Wood turns over an infrared photograph while simultaneously claiming, “This is what you look like in the dark.” Thus,  $D_p$ , What people look like in the dark is asserted and in order to determine whether Wood’s claim is true, he merely presents a photograph. It is important to note that there’s no need for further explanation of the vocabulary used in the claim, although one may want to know how the photograph came about.

In Use 3, Mr. Smith returns from his expedition to the North Pole and claims  $D_p$ , Tulips at the North Pole. Wittgenstein, again, is the naïve witness. Here, Wittgenstein has to take Smith’s word that there are, in fact, tulips at the North Pole. I suppose Wittgenstein could take the expedition himself to verify but let’s presume Smith is a recognized authority on such matters. Thus, Smith claims  $D_p$ , Tulips at the North Pole and in order to verify his claim we simply take him at his word.

So, what he’s demonstrating is that, in each use we have the same expression “I have discovered...” but the procedures of verification vary. Concerns of sufficiency aside, it is commonly upheld that the meaning of a term or expression is determined by its procedure of verification, i.e. used property or suitably, etc. Thus, the extension of “I have discovered...” varies relative to the field of study:

- Extension of Use 1) Hardy’s claim  $D_{1a}$  is true if and only if  $a$  is, in accordance with mathematical fact, the solution to the arithmetical conundrum, and we, the verifiers, understand mathematical vocabulary, a specialized language, and calculations made in deriving  $a$ , etc.
- Extension of Use 2) Wood’s claim  $D_p$ , What people look like in the dark is true if and only if Wood presents a photograph of what people look like in the dark, has, in fact, made this discovery through reliable scientific means, we verify the photo and his method, etc.
- Extension of Use 3) Smith’s claim  $D_p$ , Tulips at the North Pole is true if and only if Smith did, in fact, travel to the North Pole, there were tulips in the North Pole, Smith reported “there were tulips at the North Pole” to us, etc.

In no way we are saying these procedures of verification are exhaustive for the expression respective of their individual fields, but the implication of there being varying procedures entails, as Wittgenstein puts it, “It makes it look like a different *kind* of discovery.” So, the procedures needed to establish whether a discovery relation obtains between the speaker and the object of discovery vary relative to the field of study, which entails divergent extensions.

Suppose someone interjected, “Yes, whether it be mathematics or physics, the field of study will determine whether the discovery relation obtains but, the field of study is not FOL” – True, how an expression is used in a field of study is necessary in determining an expression’s meaning. However, it is not sufficient, more is needed. In order to determine an expression’s meaning, what must be understood is the protocol, or decorum, for positing  $D_{1x}$  with respect to one field of study from other fields of study. The classic chess analogy may shed some light:

“Someone who does not know anything about chess and sees someone making a move will not understand it, i.e. *will not understand it as a move of a game*. And following a move with understanding is different from simply seeing it.” (BT, Chapter 36, p. 113e, *italics added*)

The person observing the chess game must already know the difference between ordinary life and a game. The person must *understand* the game. Final-

ly, the person must recognize that the movement is permitted in accordance to the rules of the game. It's the first observation where FOL comes into play.

Returning to our demonstration, imagine the naïve co-worker in Use 1) responding the same way to Wood in Use 2). Wood exclaims, "I have discovered..." The co-worker interrupts, "I am not a physicist, and therefore I will not be surprised at what you say. For I cannot know what you mean until I know how you've found it." During his lecture, Wittgenstein speculates as to what the physicist's response would be, "He may say, Don't you understand English? Don't you understand 'look like', 'in the dark', etc.?" (LFM, p. 17)

- One must be aware of the differences between the procedures of verifiability in the use of "I have discovered..." in mathematics versus physics in order to fully grasp the meaning of the expression.
- During the course of our life, we've come to recognize the decorum differentiating ordinary life from particular fields of study.
- Therefore, our FOL participates in determining an expression's meaning; FOL is necessary to meaning determination.

3. Concluding remarks

If the question is "What is the meaning of a word?" and the answer is "The meaning is use.", then one would naturally suppose that the meaning of a word is "its" use and this would be correct in principle according to Wittgenstein, since it is a metaphor. However, it is its use within a LG as something quite important that belongs to a FOL.

Therefore, the use is primarily the use of a word in a LG; say an "adjustable wrench" in plumbers LG, but the use of the very word as a tool in various standard situations as well, i.e. FOLs. In other words, using the word "adjustable wrench" in plumbers LG is an important aspect of using the adjustable wrench in plumbers FOL (this point is very perspicuously presented by a figure in Baker & Hacker 2005:148, as shown in Table 3 with opposites life-grammar and explanation-understanding).

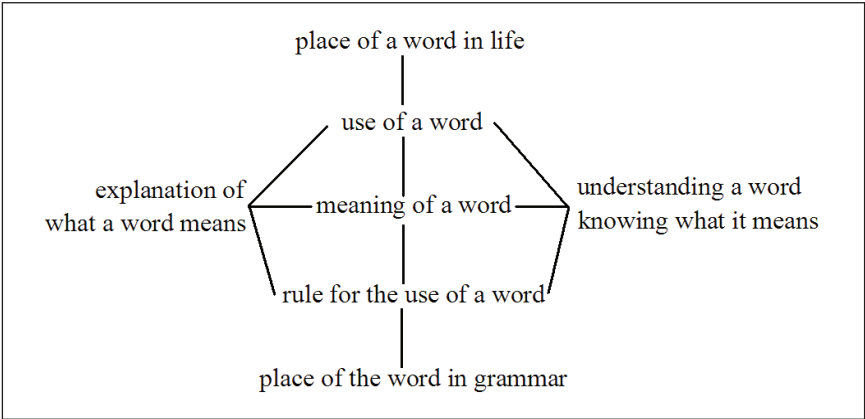


Table 3. From Baker and Hacker 2005:148

- In short, and in terms of conclusion, the meaning of a word is its use in language is surely a *grammatical (hinge) remark* and an analogy as well as that LGs belong to FOLs (and this is not an explanation of what a word means). On the other hand, that use of a particular word in a particular LG

belongs (or not) to a particular routine is a *pragmatic (axes) remark* (it marks its place in life). In order to completely understand and clearly describe what has been claimed in the text one needs to clarify Wittgenstein's concepts of meaning, use, action, and practice and their relations in PI.

- Additionally and in terms of further research, “meaning is use” slogan interpreted as an analogy has some far-reaching consequences, perhaps showing us a few possible directions from philosophy of language toward semiotics (directions taken by many experts semiotics from publication of PI on), and from semiotics of culture toward philosophy of culture, but these points needs some further clarifications which are outside of the scope and limits of the present examination.

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Primat funkcije pred strukturom

Analogijsko čitanje Wittgensteinovog aforizma “Značenje je upotreba”

**Sažetak**

U članku autori ispituju Wittgensteinov stav “značenje riječi je njena upotreba u jeziku” poglavito u kontekstu odjeljaka 23 i 43 Filozofijskih istraživanja pod vidom nekih drugih odjeljaka (poput 199–199 i 209) te nekih utjecajnijih interpretacija ovih odlomaka. Autori smatraju da je slogan “značenje je upotreba” analogija. Također, djelomično prateći Bakera i Hackera (2005), tvrdi se da je taj slogan razumljiv samo u kontekstu ovisnosti jezičnih igara o oblicima života (šira interpretacija). Naime, značenje riječi je njena upotreba u jeziku samo ako ta upotreba ima mjesto u životu. Drugim riječima, da bismo razumjeli jezične igre, čini se prirodnim promatrati ih u njihovom prirodnom kontekstu oblika života kojima pripadaju. Stoga se tvrdnja “značenje je upotreba” može razumjeti samo kao analogija ili metafora upravo u ovim smjerovima interpretacije.

**Ključne riječi**

analogija, oblici života, jezične igre, značenje riječi je njena upotreba, metafora, sličnosti, upotreba riječi, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gordon Baker & Peter Hacker

Nicholas Melville, Kristijan Krkač

Primat der Funktion über Struktur

Analogielesen von Wittgensteins Aphorismus „Bedeutung ist Gebrauch“

**Zusammenfassung**

In dem Artikel untersuchen die Autoren Wittgensteins Standpunkt „die Bedeutung eines Wortes ist sein Gebrauch in der Sprache“ hauptsächlich im Kontext der Abschnitte 23 und 43 der Philosophischen Untersuchungen, im Lichte einiger anderer Abschnitte (nämlich 197–199 und 209) sowie einiger einflussreicher Interpretationen dieser Passagen. Die Autoren behaupten, der Slogan „Bedeutung ist Gebrauch“ sei eine Analogie. Überdies vertreten sie die Ansicht, teilweise Baker und Hacker 2005 folgend, dieser Standpunkt sei begreiflich nur im Kontext der Abhängigkeit der Sprachspiele von den Lebensformen (breitere Interpretation). Die Bedeutung eines Wortes, nämlich, ist sein Gebrauch in der Sprache nur; wenn dieser Gebrauch einen Platz im Leben hat. Mit anderen Worten, um Sprachspiele zu verstehen, scheint es natürlich, sie in ihrem natürlichen Kontext der Lebensformen zu beobachten, denen sie zugehören. Demgemäß kann die Feststellung „Bedeutung ist Gebrauch“, gerade in diesen Interpretationsrichtungen, nur als Analogie bzw. Metapher verstanden werden.

**Schlüsselwörter**

Analogie, Lebensformen, Sprachspiele, die Bedeutung eines Wortes ist sein Gebrauch, Metapher, Ähnlichkeiten, Gebrauch eines Wortes, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gordon Baker & Peter Hacker

Nicholas Melville, Kristijan Krkač

Le primat de la fonction sur la structure

Une lecture analogique de l’aphorisme de Wittgenstein  
« La signification c’est l’usage »

**Résumé**

Cette article interroge le point de vue de Wittgenstein selon lequel « la signification d’un mot et son emploi dans le langage » principalement dans le contexte des sections 23 et 43 des Recherches philosophiques, mais aussi à la lumière d’autres sections (telles que les sections 197–199 et 209) et de d’autres interprétations influentes de ces passages. Les auteurs affirment que la devise « la signification c’est l’usage » est une analogie. De même, suivant partiellement

*Baker et Hacker (2005), ils soutiennent que cette devise est compréhensible seulement dans un contexte où les jeux de mots entretiennent une dépendance avec les formes de vie (large interprétation). En effet, la signification des mots est son emploi dans la langue seulement si cet emploi a sa place dans la vie. Ainsi, l'affirmation selon laquelle « la signification c'est l'usage » peut se comprendre uniquement en tant qu'analogie ou métaphore, et cela précisément dans ces directions d'interprétations.*

**Mots-clés**

analogie, formes de vie, jeux de mots, la signification c'est l'usage, métaphore, emploi d'un mot, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gordon Baker & Peter Hacker